

on the whole, should be placed beneath the more typical Cranes, though it may shew points of specialization. Osteologically, it appears to me that *Aramus* is distinctly more specialized than its allies; in any case I am convinced that it is necessary to leave it as a genus of the family Gruidæ, and not to create for it a special family or subfamily. Its main claim to be considered as nearly related to *Balearica* appears to me to lie in the fact that both these genera have been specialized from the more typical Crane-structure along the same lines.

III.—*Further Information on two recently described Species of Passerine Birds.* By JOSEPH I. S. WHITAKER, F.Z.S., M.B.O.U.

(Plates II. & III.)

IN the 'Bulletin' of the British Ornithologists' Club for 1901 (vol. xi. p. 52) a new species of Long-tailed Titmouse from Sicily was described by me under the name of *Acredula sicula*, specimens of the bird having been exhibited at the meeting of that Club held on the 20th of March, 1901.

Having since obtained further information respecting this interesting addition to our European Ornis, and particularly as regards its distribution and breeding in Sicily, I think it worth while to publish the result of my investigations in 'The Ibis,' and at the same time to give a figure of the new bird.

As will be seen by Plate II., the Sicilian Titmouse greatly resembles *A. caucasica*, but, as mentioned in the 'Bulletin,' it differs from that species in its smaller size, and also, to a certain extent, in the colouring of its plumage.

The following are the respective measurements of the two species, as given in the 'Bulletin' of the B.O.C. :—

A. sicula ex Mus. J. I. S. Whitaker, Palermo :

♂ ad. Total length 5·0, wing 2·25, tail 2·9, tarsus 0·6.

♀ ad. „ „ 5·0, „ 2·20, „ 2·9, „ 0·6.

A. caucasica ex Owens College Mus., Manchester :

♂ ad. Total length 5·5, wing 2·45, tail 3·3, tarsus 0·7.

♀ ad. „ „ 5·5, „ 2·45, „ 3·2, „ 0·7.



H. Grönvold del. et lith.

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ACREDULA SICULA.

The sexes of *A. sicula* appear to be identical, or nearly so, in their plumage, colouring, and markings, as well as in their soft parts and measurements. The young of this species, as shown in the accompanying Plate, differs from the adult bird in having the greater part of the upper plumage brown, while the centre of the crown and the fringes of the scapulars and secondaries are whitish; moreover, on the underparts the rose-colour on the flanks and crissum is less pronounced. The respective measurements of old and fully-grown young birds seem to be the same, except with regard to the tail, which is rather longer in the latter, owing perhaps to the absence of wear and tear.

With respect to the distribution of *A. sicula* in Sicily, I may say that it appears to occur only in the more wooded inland districts of the island, and at elevations varying from 700 to 1500 metres above sea-level, according to the time of year and according to the more sheltered or more exposed position of the woods frequented. On the sea-coast and in the low-lying districts of the island the species appears not to be found. The woods frequented by this Titmouse vary in character according to their altitude, those lower down being mainly composed of deciduous and evergreen oaks (*Quercus robur*, *Q. suber*, and *Q. ilex*), chestnuts, and olive-trees, while the higher forests are almost exclusively of deciduous oak and beech, although the ilex oak also flourishes on some of the higher hills. Apparently, however, the character of the woods is immaterial to the birds, which seem as much at home among the low-growing olive-groves as they do among the lofty forest oaks.

The first examples I obtained of *A. sicula* were procured at the beginning of February in the Bosco di Fienzza, a well-wooded inland district, about 750 metres above sea-level, lying to the south of Palermo. The woods in this neighbourhood are composed chiefly of oak, both evergreen and deciduous, with a few elms and ash trees, and with a luxuriant undergrowth of low-growing plants, mostly of the *maquis* description. Throughout the month of February and the early part of March this Titmouse continued to occur in the Fienzza woods more or less plentifully, but by

the end of March it was no longer to be met with there, and I then found it and obtained specimens on Monte Aspro, in the Madonian range of mountains, at an altitude of about 1000 metres above sea-level. The Monte Aspro woods, which consist almost entirely of deciduous oak, with an undergrowth of bracken and other ferns, are remarkably fine, several of the trees being veritable giants. Owing, however, to the fact of the district being somewhat inaccessible, it is but little known to the ordinary tourist travelling in Sicily, and few visitors to the island have any idea of the existence of these mountain-forests, which in extent and beauty rival those of more northern latitudes. According to historians, the greater part of the mountainous region of Sicily was once clothed with such primeval woods, which the ruthless hand of man has gradually swept away and reduced to their present relatively insignificant proportions.

During the first fortnight of April I obtained further specimens of *A. sicula* from Monte Aspro; but by the middle of that month comparatively few of the birds were to be met with there, and by the end of it they seemed to have entirely left the locality and to have moved to some higher woods on the same range of mountains. Here, I feel sure, they must have settled down for the breeding-season, although my collector failed to find any of their nests, nor indeed did he meet with the birds themselves on a subsequent visit which he paid to the neighbourhood about a month later. During the month of June, however, I sent him to another district lying to the east of Monte Aspro, but still in the Madonian or, more properly, the Nebrodian range of mountains; and here he found *A. sicula* comparatively numerous, and was able to secure specimens of fully-grown young as well as of adult birds. He also found two nests, both containing half-fledged young birds, which were probably of the second brood. According to my collector's report, the nests were placed in the forks of olive-trees, at a height of about eight feet from the ground, and were domed at the top. The last-mentioned district, which

surrounds the small town of Mistretta, in the Province of Messina, has an elevation varying from 900 to 1300 metres above sea-level, and its woods are chiefly of cork-, oak-, chestnut-, and olive-trees. I was somewhat surprised to find *A. sicula* at an elevation of below 1000 metres in the month of June; but the slopes of the hills near Mistretta have a northern aspect, and the temperature is probably never very high there. On the approach of autumn *A. sicula* returns to its winter-quarters, and during the first week of October I obtained specimens of it again from the Bosco di Fienzza, whereas my collector entirely failed to meet with the species during that month in the Madonian mountains (the *Montes Marones* of Pliny) or the Nebrodian range (the *Montes Nebrodes* of Strabo).

To sum up, *Acredula sicula* appears to be an insular form, closely allied to *A. caucasica* Lorenz, occurring, so far as is at present known, only in the island of Sicily, and inhabiting the wooded inland districts of that island, where it breeds in the higher mountain forests.

So far as I am aware, no other form of *Acredula* occurs in Sicily, although Doderlein has stated that *A. irbii* was to be found there as a winter migrant; indeed he mentions having sent a Sicilian specimen of that species to the British Museum ('Avifauna del Mod. e della Sic.' pp. 138 & 341). It is quite possible that *A. irbii* may also occur in the island, but I have no knowledge of its doing so, and the Sicilian collection of the Palermo University Museum only possesses a solitary example of *Acredula*, the label attached to which bears the following inscription: "*Parus caudatus*, Linn., Marzo 1888: Bosco della Fienzza."

After some hesitation, I have decided not to suppress the names of the several districts in Sicily where I have found *A. sicula*, as I think that it would hardly repay any trading naturalist to attempt to lay in a "stock" of specimens of the species, and the difficulties which beset the ordinary traveller in the interior of the island are of themselves sufficient to deter any but the keenest collector from penetrating those mountainous regions!

I append the following full description of the types of this *Acredula* in my collection :—

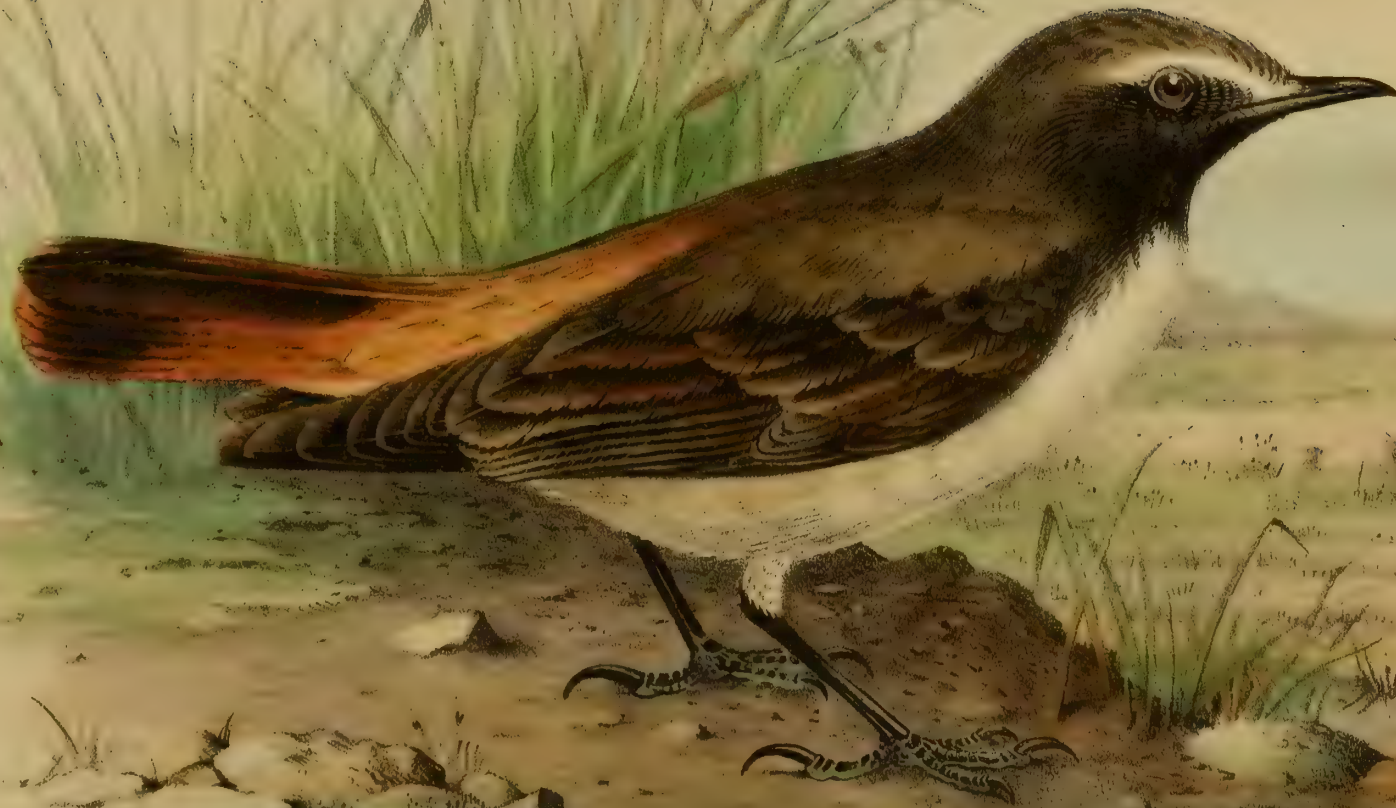
ACREDULA SICULA. (Plate II.)

Adult male (from Bosco di Fienzza, Sicily; February 3rd, 1901). Forehead and crown light brown, with an ill-defined median whitish stripe; lores and space immediately surrounding the eyes whitish; a collar round the nape dull black; entire back and rump grey; upper tail-coverts blackish; wings blackish brown, the secondaries edged with white; tail with its four central feathers black, the next adjoining pair black, very slightly fringed with white on the outer web, the next pair rather more fringed with white, and the two exterior pairs distinctly tipped with white and having the entire outer web white; chin white; throat and upper breast white, with a slight admixture of darker feathers; lower breast and abdomen whitish, tinged with pale brown, and becoming vinous rose on the flanks and crissum; under tail-coverts vinous rose, tipped with whitish. Irides dark hazel, eyelids yellowish; bill and feet blackish brown. Total length 5 inches, wing 2·25, culmen ·20, tarsus ·60.

Adult female (from Bosco di Fienzza, Sicily; February 3rd, 1901). Plumage, colouring, and soft parts almost identical with those of the male. Total length 5 inches, wing 2·20, culmen ·20, tarsus ·60.

In a recent number of the 'Bulletin' of the British Ornithologists' Club (see vol. x. p. xvii) a new species of Chat was described by me under the name of *Saxicola cummingi*. The specimen from which the description was taken is in the British Museum collection, and appears to have been wrongly identified as *S. mæsta* Licht.

This Chat was procured by Mr. W. D. Cumming at Fao, in the Persian Gulf, and as it is apparently a rare species—the present example being, so far as I am aware, the only one known to exist in any collection—I have thought it well to have the accompanying figure of it made for 'The Ibis.'



H. Grönvold.

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H. Grönvold del. et lith.

SAXICOLA CUMINGI.

Mintern Bros. imp.

The following is copied from the description given of the bird in the 'Bulletin' of the B.O.C.:—

“*SAXICOLA CUMMINGI.* (Plate III.)

“*Adult.* Closely allied to *S. xanthoprymna* H. & E., but distinguished by having the basal part of the tail-feathers rusty red like the upper tail-coverts, instead of white. From *S. maesta* to be at once distinguished by having the top of the head and nape brownish grey like the back, the rump and upper tail-coverts rusty, and the rufous on the outer tail-feathers extending to within 0·7 inch of the extremity. Total length 6·5 inches, culmen 0·78, wing 3·7, tail 2·45, tarsus 0·95.

“*Hab.* Fao, Persian Gulf (*W. D. Cumming*).”

IV.—*Results of an Ornithological Journey through Colombia and Ecuador.*—Part IV. By WALTER GOODFELLOW, F.Z.S.

[Continued from 'The Ibis,' 1901, p. 715.]

Family DENDROCOLAPTIDÆ.

250. *UPUCERTHIA EXCELSIOR* (Scl.).

Four ♂ s, 2 ♀ s, from Pichiucha, Pedregal, and Corazón. Met with singly in lonely situations, at altitudes of about 13,000 feet, on stony or lava-covered ground. The stomachs contained small beetles and other insects.

251. *LEPTASTHENURA ANDICOLA* (Scl.).

Three ♂ s, 2 ♀ s, from the Volcan de Pichincha, 14,500 feet, and the Mojanda Pass, North Ecuador, at a similar altitude. These birds fly close along the top of the “ páramo ” grass, settling on any plant that will bear their weight. At night they retire under the tufts of grass or into the crevices of rocks to sleep. The stomachs contained moths, beetles, and seeds.

252. *SYNALLAXIS FRONTALIS ELEGANTIOR.*

Synallaxis elegantior Scl. Cat. Am. B. p. 151.

Synallaxis frontalis Scl. Cat. Birds, xv. p. 39.

Two ♂ s, 1 ♀ . Gualea, West Ecuador.